



When was the last time you took a vacation? Did you head out of town? Did you have a destination in mind? Did you make some preparations, like gassing up the car or making flight reservations? Maybe you even went so far as to plan where you would be staying each night along the way.

This kind of planning is fairly typical of people hoping to make the most of their time away from work. Going online to check out all the travel options, discussing potential destinations with friends and co-workers, consulting a travel agent; it's all part of the fun! This kind of research and planning allows us to spend some time enjoying the trip before we ever leave home.

We're more likely to have a journey that isn't interrupted by such events as road closures, weather delays, or cancelled flights if we simply take some time to get directions from informed sources. This isn't to say that we can't alter our plan along the way. Maybe avoiding that road closure takes us somewhere that we decide we'd like to stop and explore, or perhaps the travel agent suggests a destination that we might never have considered on our own.

What does any of this have to do with career planning? Consider this: people spend way more time at work than they do on vacation, but questions like, "Did you have a destination in mind?" "Did you make some preparations?" when applied to careers are often met with a blank stare. The sad fact is that many people put more thinking into choosing a vacation destination than they do their vocation destination!

School counselors and others are working to remedy this situation by helping today's students get directions for the trip of a lifetime—their careers. One important strategy in this effort* is the implementation of Utah's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Career Pathways.

The goal of Career Pathways is to establish a seamless education system that provides a one-system approach for student success, whether they're heading to formal education programs beyond high school, going directly to work, or—as is common—doing both.

The Utah CTE Career Pathways are the maps that can help guide students to the high school courses

and postsecondary options most relevant to their chosen career destinations. Career Pathways facilitate the same kind of planning for careers that is applied to vacations. The strategy helps students know just where to go on-line to check out all the career options, have opportunities to discuss potential career destinations with friends, and regularly consult counselors, teachers and their parents as they plan their career journey. This kind of research and planning in school allows students to spend some time enjoying the trip before they ever leave home. It should also result in a more pleasant journey, unencumbered by unnecessary delays, while allowing for periodic evaluation of both the course and destination. And, who knows? Getting directions from informed sources along the way may lead students to a destination that they might never have considered on their own.

For more detail visit www.utahcte.org. For more information on the role that teachers and families play, visit www.acrna.net/publications.htm.

**For more information on the critical role that teachers, counselors and families play in assisting young people to make informed career and academic choices, visit America's Career Resource Network Association: www.acrna.net/publications.htm*

To Get Directions For
Your Career Visit
www.careers.utah.gov